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Participatory management: an opportunity for human resources in education

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Abstract

The present paper refines the participatory management (PM) concept in educational organization by adopting a multidimensional approach. The author examined simultaneously fifteen components of Participatory management namely: 1-Trust 2-Decision making 3-Team work 4-Share power 5-Motivation 6-Communication 7-Involvement 8-Collaboration 9-Democracy 10-transparency 11-Innovation 12-Respect 13-Problem solving 14-Identify common goal 15-qualitarian. The data were obtained from a sample of 903 Iranian female teachers. The results indicate, there is significant relationship between all of components of participatory management. This study suggests the application of the fifteen components of Participatory management for achieving suitable strategy to plan for logical use of the human resource in educational organization.

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Keyword: participatory management; trust; Decision making; Team work; Share power; Motivation; Communication; Collaboration; Innovation; Problem solving

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, employees will be the key to an organization's success. Research shows that employees are starting to make more demands on their employers. They want to be part of a team and they want more involvement in decision-making (Owens, 2001; Wood et al., 2004). They also want opportunities for growth and development (Faille, 2000). Through a judicious use of Participatory management (PM), leaders may make sound decisions by drawing upon the collective expertise, experience, and wisdom of their employees (Lichtenstein, 2000). Participatory management, emphasis on employee development (Anonymous, 2007). In Glosser's opinion, the participatory group is something more than putting individuals in groups (Glosser, 2001). The improvement of the individuals' skills is also taken into consideration in addition to getting them involved in the group activities (Hirst, 2000) and since, participation is dependent of the mental involvement of the individuals and not their physical presence (Muhs, 1982). Participatory management is characterized as a style under which managers have complete trust in subordinates, and much of the decision making is accomplished by group participation.

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1.1 *Theoretical background*

Participative management is, in fact, an old idea. The pioneer in this area was Frederick Taylor, an engineer in the late 1800's. In fact, he became known as "The father of scientific management." Taylor's approach was to improve the efficiency of the job by designing the "One Best Way." Taylor's philosophy of management was influenced by four basic principles. First, develop efficient jobs; second, decrease soldiering, a term used to describe horse play, and third, good mental attitude toward work and fourth, worker management cooperation. The three major contributors to the development of scientific management were Frank, and his wife Lillian Gillberth, Harry Gantt, and Harrington Emerson. Fayol's contribution can be categorized in four areas: first, Fayol made the distinction between operating and managing activities. The difference may seem obvious today. But early in 19th century, the distinction was rarely made. Second, he was the first to clearly identify specific management functions. Expanding on his original theory, Fayol gave us the classic five functions of management: planning, organizing, supervising, coordinating, and controlling. Third, Fayol proposed fourteen principles of management intended to help managers in solving management related problems. Finally, Fayol urged that managers be educated in the correct use of proper managerial skills not simply trained on the job (Fayol, 1984).

Three individuals who played major roles in the success of the behavioral school were Elton Mayo, Chester Barnard, and Douglas McGregor. The importance of the treatment of workers, their work, and their social environment were well documented in Mayo's studies. Barnard maintained that people form organizations in order to achieve certain goals they could not achieve alone. Organization can only be productive, he argued, when the goals of the organization and the goals of its employees are kept in balance. Barnard also addressed the issues of communications, motivation, and setting objectives (Griffin, 1997). It is grounded in the humanist tradition and traces its lineage to Mayo's Hawthorne studies of the 1920s and 30s, an important aspect of which involved employee co-determination of working conditions (Lynch, 1998). Work is an integral component of Maslow's self-actualization theory. The ability of people to accept responsibility, be creative, be involved, and to contribute in the workplace is inseparable from the ability to self-actualize (Maslow, 1998). McGregor's (1960) Theory Y places workplace participation at the center of employee motivation and satisfaction. Similarly, Likert's "System 4 organizations" fully integrate workers into all decisions related to their work. Likert used his own categorization system, breaking management styles into the four systems (Likert, 1967).

Researchers have found that Participatory management may positively impact job satisfaction (Kim 2002; Spence-Laschinger et al 2004), organizational commitment (Spence-Laschinger et al 2004), perceived organizational support (Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002; Lau & Lim 2002), organizational citizenship behavior (Van Yperen et al 1999), labor-management relations (Ospina & Yaroni 2003) and job performance (Lau & Lim 2002; Ming 2004) Positive work outcomes (Siegall & Worth, 2001).

1.2 *Rationale for hypothesis:*

Driven by the pressures of the Quality and Knowledge Era, it is clear that many organizations have shifted toward the Human Resource Frame and participatory management (Hanayik & Haley, 2005). According to Somech (2002) participative management is a complex concept that consists of several dependent yet distinct dimensions. This research attempts to define Participatory management as multidimensional approach contains fifteen components as follow:

1-Trust: PM enhancing the levels of trust (Blase & Blase, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2001) and high levels of trust hastens the establishment of strong networks among the members (Hargreaves, 2001)

2-Decision making: PM is key decision-making processes (Saxton, 2004) and it is the practice of empowering employees to participate in organizational decision making (Marzano, 2003).

3-Team work: PM increase decision making that it is accomplished by group participation (Robert & Moran, 1998).

4-Share power: PM is a process in which influence is shared among individuals who are otherwise hierarchically unequal (Kim, 2002; Marzano, 2003).

5-Motivation: participative approaches to decision making mainly out of pragmatic motives to achieve valued organizational results (Somech, 2002)

6-Communication: PM causes Communication effectively with subordinates (Albanese, 1975).

7-Involvement: PM encompasses various employee involvement schemes in co-determination of working conditions (Kim, 2002; Marzano, 2003).

8-Collaboration: Through a judicious use of participatory management, leaders may make sound decisions by drawing upon the collective expertise, experience, and wisdom of their employees (Lichtenstein, 2000).

9-Democracy: Democracy is a benefit of participatory management (Bartle, 2007).

10-Transparency: Transparency is a benefit of participatory management (Bartle, 2007).

11-Innovation: PM encourage innovations (Walker & Dimmock, 2000).

12-Respect: PM prepare a situation for expressing appreciation when a subordinate does a good job (Albanese, 1975).

13-Problem solving: PM promotes the adoption of problem solving, flexibility and change (Marchant, 1982).

14-Identify common goal: PM is an co-operation between manager and subordinates in the setting up of objectives (Dutton, 1973).

15-Equalitarian: In PM power inequities are balanced (Harchar & Hyle, 1996).

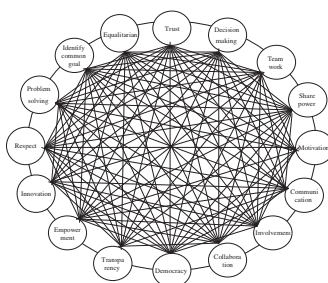


Figure 1: Possible correlated components in participatory management

As it is inevitable that the managers should try to improve the individual and organizational skills of their employees and attempt at raising their abilities to the desirable level, the question of employing the participatory management dimension by the managers becomes an important issue. It is questioned that can there be a relationship between participatory management s' dimension?

2. Body

2.1 Purpose of the research

To examine the empirical and theoretical relationships among the 15 components of participatory management. If there were strong relationships among the components, the implications would be that participatory management could be the best method for enhancing school performance, and hence it would be imperative that it be used widely in Iran to bring new changes in school management.

2.2 Sample of the research

The sample of this study comprises 903 female high school teachers in the city of Mashhad, Iran. Previous research has shown that female high schools perform better than male high schools.

2.3 Research methodology

Step I: Development of the survey instrument and pilot testing it to determine its reliability and validity (reliability is based on CronBach alpha was estimated 0.984 by SPSS analysis).

Step II: Distribution of the survey instrument to the identified sample and collection of the answered survey after two weeks. Follow-up interviews were made wherever necessary to verify some data (The researchers use the participatory management questionnaire, which contain of 96 questions).

Step III: Document analysis of meetings.

Step IV: Descriptive and correlation statistical analyses were utilized in this study. Accordingly, Pearson's product moment correlation was used to determine the interrelationships among the 15 components of participatory management.

3. Result

Based on the data analyses, the research found that the overall mean value for Participatory management in female high schools in Mashhad city was 70.1 (from the maximum score 100), with the standard deviation value 16.45. This means that there was a high or prominent level of Participatory management in the female government high schools in Mashhad. The mean values for the 15 components were between 68.0 to 74.0, imply high level also. The results show that the highest mean value is 78.1 for the Respect component whereas the lowest mean value is 58.6 for the Share power component. The t-Test value was at significant level for all the 15 components, the highest being 29.363 and the lowest being -2.472. Overall the mean value is more than 60 except Share power component at 16.0 standard deviation, and t-test value is 18.563 at 0.00 significant level. These findings show that the level of participatory management and the 14 components except Share power were at prominent or favorable level (more than 60 mean values) for the female government high schools in Mashhad district, Iran. In addition, by the correlation analysis, the findings indicate there were strong and significant correlations 0.065 (high correlation with 99% coefficient level) among the 15 components of participatory management. The results show that the highest correlation was 0.913 for the Involvement component whereas the lowest correlation was 0.767 for the Trust component.

4. Conclusion

The shift to Participatory management Participatory management in the workplace is both inevitable and necessary. Therefore the readiness of manager to utilize participative approaches to decision making mainly out of pragmatic motives to achieve valued organizational results. Findings of the study can be used to make some changes to the management process and improve organizational performance of high schools in Iran. In addition, findings can be used to trigger more research on similar topic in Iranian schools so as to obtain a more comprehensive view on the applicability of participatory management in enhancing performance of schools and developing the human resource. This study suggests the application of the fifteen components of participatory management for better achievement goal organization. Dialogues on participative organization can be seen as a way for an organization to build key capabilities essential for success in the complex and dynamic contemporary human resource in educational organizational (Case, 1998).

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